THE COMMONWEAL

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CONTENTS

A Man of Meaning..... 395

Week by Week..... 397

The Doctor of Letters..... 400

Relations With Latin America..... William Franklin Sands 401

On the Contemplative Life..... Donald Attwater 404

Some Vulgar Errors.....Robert J. Kane 405

The Play.....R. Dana Skinner 407

Communications 408

Books.....Bertram C. A. Windle, Catherine Radziwill, George N. Shuster, Grenville Vernon 409

The Quiet Corner..... 413

A MAN OF MEANING

WHAT is criticism? The American may respond pertinently, it seems to us, with a reference to his own ego. In no other country has so ceaseless an inventory been taken by intelligence or what presumes to be intelligence. The constant flooded light that plays about every person or thing attended with momentary prominence dwarfs stature and magnifies defects. It even renders permanent attentiveness to spectacles of importance out of the question by dint of constantly illuminating new objects, new horizons. The old becomes pallid, no matter how deserving intrinsically of veneration. Under such conditions it is possible to have a series of entertaining books but no great author; a succession of brilliant politicians but no statesman; a downpour of ideas but no philosophy. William James's famous statement that education taught people how to recognize things well done needs a supplement—a supplement which may be defined simply as an escape from the phosphorescent boredom of advertising.

Perhaps no aspect of this rotogravure civilization is more disquieting than the distorted medium through which it views human personality. We have developed, for instance, a really barbarous fondness for anecdote. Or perhaps it would be more correct to say, vicious gossip. Prying and exceedingly industrious persons fill up books with the kind of chatter which entertains the more spinsterly sororities, to show that in 1913 such and such a celebrity uttered an inane remark over a bottle of ginger-ale. French authors, desperately in need of bolsters for their private budgets, work overtime to supply credulous Yankee readers of translations with minutely detailed accounts of artistic love affairs. No one is so certain of a hearing as the domestic or imported gentlemen who can describe the very rattle of a closeted skeleton. Of course, all this might be really interesting if there were not so much of it. Under the circumstances one can only view with astonishment the descending deluge of impertinent futility.

There has been so much talk of "awakening sluggish America" and of "punching the yokel in the midriff," that nobody seems to have considered how important it is that America should settle down. You can startle the college freshman with revelations of how dully his mind functions, but when you get through startling you usually have, sadly enough, only a second-rate teacher or a disappointed clerk. A particularly jagged vocabulary may reveal the suffocating platitudes of Main Street, but when the smoke has

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cleared away the chief result is an increase in the subway crowd. Obviously, neither man nor civilization can grow without roots; and roots need a relatively deeper soil than can be compounded out of the dust scared up from the wanderers' highway. It might even be said that a human being will inevitably be stunted unless, in the sense popularized by Maurice Barrès in France, he draws nourishment from the family tombs.

Family consciousness is, indeed, one of the surest recipes for integral human development. The circle of ancestors and compeers, living and dead, is something beyond which one cannot escape, regardless of trials and theories. It supplies the stuff of existence and it also furnishes adequate criticism. Nowhere else is the revelation of infirmities more salutarily made, and in the pattern of achieved ancestral nobility a character can be nobly and energetically formed. The value to America of the family idea, though dimly recognized historically in such instances as the Lees and the Adamses, has almost been lost sight of, with enormous and distressing results. Would the sons of old Harvard, one wonders, surrender the privileges of parenthood so blithely if they understood the possibilities of childhood? And at the other end of the social ladder tillers of the soil and craftsmen need badly that sense of the artistocracy of their employment which somehow will not be developed outside the sphere of inherited and established skill. Only the profession of arms and the religious ministry seem to have retained to some extent the idea of honor and service bequeathed from generation to generation.

For these reasons it is worth while reflecting upon the career of Augustin Cochin, French publicist, statesman and sociologist, as it is revealed in the newly published collection of his letters, briefly reviewed elsewhere in the present issue. Documents of this sort are rare. Augustin Cochin was probably not a man of the first order, a genius, a creator. But there was developed in him the finest grasp of beneficent opportunities open to one of his superior family fortune, together with requisite tact and ability for making use of them.

One of Cochin's earliest letters to his uncle expresses the desire "to discuss at length about those subjects which demand all the strength, the good will, and the brains of men who have the good of their civilization at heart;" but adds as well that "all my being longs for the noble affections of family life." It is most interesting to observe how, no matter what urgent professional or altruistic duties might engage his time, this man lived in perpetual consciousness of domestic ties from which he drew vital hope. In this dual light he regarded the major problems of his epoch. A letter written to the sociologist Le Play—in itself a document of great historic interest—at the moment when France was overwhelmed by the military and political débâcle of 1871, avows the fact that its author cannot detach his thought from "the condition of the workers in the large cities."

"We are," he said, "the defeated, but we are also the diseased. We have succumbed and are still under the malignant spell of a lamentable moral weakening, and of a profound social antagonism. By force of circumstances we are compelled to avow humbly that France is the victim of a special malady, ancient and chronic, intensified by the faults of the empire, the disasters of the war, and the crimes of the commune. Some believe that no remedy can come. I would protest against this pessimism. I believe in the possible convalescence of our country." He might well say these things because all his life had been given to fundamental remedial endeavors. Devoted to the service of Catholicism at a time when most persons of prominence were removing religion from their lives, he learned from leaders like Frederic Ozanam and Père Lacordaire the truth that "the best way in which Christians can serve their faith is to be, in all fields of endeavor, the first and the best." And so it was natural that Cochin who was burdened with the duties incident to a political career and to the editorship of the newly resurrected Correspondant, should also find time to visit schools which his generosity enabled to exist and orphanages for which his heart beat swiftly. He had that splendid knowledge of permanently vital things which alone can prevent even the most gifted of enthusiasts from disastrous monomanias of reform.

It is part of the significance of Cochin that he was quite free of what might so easily have been aristocratic preconceptions. He was one of those Frenchmen who, following the brilliant lead of Montalembert, accepted the democratic version of government. "It seems to me," he wrote early in life, "that, apart from idealistic theories which never cease to carry a certain weight with my mind, that the republic is the natural form of government in a country like ours." To this conviction he remained faithful, and guided by it he did his best to leaven the thought of his fellow Catholics with plans for a better social democracy. His studies of industrial poverty, his work in behalf of labor organization, his public advocacy of practical charity—all these things were part, not of his dream about the future, but of his desire of what the future should be.

His assumptions, his political guesses, may have been wrong. But the source from which his life drew its verve was healthy and steadfast, so that he must remain an illustrious example of the cultured layman who squanders none of his energy but correlates it always with the best purposes for which his family and his race have lived. The manufacturers of petty biography will not find him a subject for juicy contemplation. That is one reason why he is remembered here in a day when the heralds of darkening democracy might be reassured through the vision of such an amicable aristocrat.

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THE COMMONWEAL

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WEEK BY WEEK

THOUGH the news despatches are vague and contradictory, it is clear that a first step has been taken toward ending religious war in Mexico. The conference between representative bishops and President Calles made two things clear: first, that the government is by no means sure of its ability to force its views upon antagonistic public opinion; and second, that the only religious body in Mexico which counts when a show-down is in order, is the Catholic group. But necessarily, the first step is not the whole distance. It is, if one reads carefully the reconsidered opinion of the bishops themselves, only an inconsiderable part of the distance. Many other observers may feel that the establishment of a compromise is now only a matter of time. They may surmise that the pressure of public opinion in Mexico and neighboring countries is so strong that Señor Calles realizes the necessity for a graceful retreat, especially since the Catholic party has so clearly repudiated all forms of violence, and everything like a "state-church" platform. But it is nevertheless only too obvious that roseate hopes for a speedy settlement of the problem should be entertained cautiously.

PRESIDENT CALLES'S suggestion that the Mexican congress be petitioned to reconsider the religious clauses in the constitution, with a view to their amendment, is clearly a case of relayed responsibility. The congress and he himself are one and the same power; the carefully selected representatives are the chorus which reëchoes his dictatorial solo. It may be that the President really wishes to abandon the religious fight—though his attitude toward registration of the clergy seems suspicious—and will therefore act through the screen of congressional decision. It may be, on the other hand, that the suggestion is merely a ruse by means of which it is hoped to offset the fact that the majority of Mexicans do not favor the religious laws. Time only will decide. One may hope for the best without neglecting to make preparation for the worst. In either case, the reconstruction of Mexico will remain a vast and unusually complex undertaking.

THIS reconstruction must depend to a considerable extent upon the attitude of citizens of the United States. Amicable, constructive, helpful relations must take the place of the mutual distrust and contempt that have existed during so many years. Above all, history has revealed the futility of attempts by our government to regulate the affairs of Mexico from Washington. Intervention must either be a complete absorption and regulation, or it should not be tried at all. Records of the State Department show that the Wilson administration, in its treatment of Mexican affairs, was actuated by the very highest motives. It failed signally, however, both because it could not succeed in getting the agrarian reform it supported carried out in a legal, intelligent and scientific manner, and because its hope to establish religious liberty in Mexico was compromised by the very agents it supported. In short, United States subsidy of the Carranza revolution was one of the worst blunders ever made by a government, and ought to stand as a permanent warning to those who think they might do good by fomenting some kind of armed violence in the republic of Mexico.

ONE is glad to see, therefore, an explanation of the recent Knights of Columbus resolution, by Supreme Knight James A. Flaherty, who says that his order "did not demand that the American government intervene in Mexico," but merely pointed out that conditions in the neighboring republic are such that its official administration should not have been accorded recognition. We take this to mean that the order does not ask for intervention of any kind, and we should like to see it go on record now as determined to aid in getting at all the facts about the Mexican sociological situation, and in building up a regenerative program based on those facts. Precisely because Mexico is a Catholic country, an order as capable and highly respected as the Knights of Columbus can exemplify to citizens there the benefits of organization.

MARC SANGNIER is a variety of human being without whom modern civilization would not be complete. Devoted to religion and the welfare of humanity, ready to employ his once considerable riches to aid what seem to him good causes, he has lived and moved in a wilderness of idealistic chimeras difficult

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to view seriously. Upon the heels of the Sillon movement followed the scheme for universal amity, as expressed in the International Peace Congresses, of which the sixth has just taken place. One knows the species of queer duck that invariably shows up at meetings of this kind—anaemic, unsanitary mortals who loathe even a pop-gun; eccentric, youthful philosophers who take the romantic view that history is what it is because mankind overlooked the proper formula of conduct; and wandering orators from the East, whose Buddhism has shortened to bedlam. Even poor Sangnier must have been rather astonished at the crowd his genius—he has genius, after a fashion—summoned together this year at Bierville, France.

HIS own eloquent plea that disarmament will depend on exchanging the present League of Nations for a nobler, more perfect "league of peoples," probably struck him as the farthest discovered point of Quixotic radicalism. But how tame it seemed to the more juvenile among his auditors! Why, the League of Nations is only a European institution, and besides that, we cannot wait. Therefore the congress, in solemn convention assembled, decided by plebiscite that all armaments are to be abolished at once. "Eventually, why not now?," seems to have been their very original slogan. The juveniles were merely rebelling against "old men" (apparently including poor Marc himself) who didn't have to go to war, and accordingly were slow about ushering in pacifism. Every good cause has its devotees, but the business of outlawing war is so serious, so necessary, and so difficult to conduct that one cannot help wishing these "International Congresses" would take up the study of needlework or interior decorating.

IN so far as it was positive, Secretary Kellogg's statement of the official United States attitude toward international action was also a resumé of the disarmament problem. Mr. Kellogg assured his Plattsburg audience that the government is not examining the clouds. It concedes that there are important reasons why armaments should be larger in Europe than they are here, and that the discussion has not been shifted to land forces in order to avoid any further limitation of the navy. It feels that, at present, no universally applicable recipe can be determined upon. "Conditions throughout the world are so dissimilar, and in some areas are so disturbed . . . that it seems a futile task to devise an all-embracing formula. But where we have a group of nations which have common interests, as well as possibly common dangers, then the same factors generally operate upon the size of the armies which they respectively maintain in time of peace, and a common consideration of the limitation of these armaments may be practicable." In other words, the plan is to promote regional armament treaties in so far as that is possible. This will be difficult to work out in detail, and meanwhile one notes with comfort that the underlying effect of Mr. Kellogg's address is to reassure the world of American interest in, and readiness to coöperate with, the League of Nations to secure all possible modifications of the present provocative military situation. There may be some tendency on the part of Geneva to put forth suggestions which our present international status will not permit us to accept; but there is much—there will be more—that we can support and promote to real advantage. To have placed the United States squarely on the side of peace is a service for which the administration deserves credit and gratitude.

"NO outcry that has followed the great war is more unceasing than the demand that state secrets be published. But everybody knows that the archives of the Vatican have nothing to conceal," declares Von Lama, in concluding his history of Pope and Curia, to which previous references have been made in these columns. The scope of papal diplomacy is so vast, the number of individuals and circumstances involved is so great, that one comes away from the panorama created during the past few years, bewildered by the magnitude and complexity of what has been seen. Latin-American affairs alone, for instance, have meant a ceaseless battle to safeguard the rights and opportunities of the Church, even while the eventual disappearance of the older system of relations was being prepared for. It is difficult for one not familiar with conditions to understand with what tenacity officials still cling to ecclesiastical privileges attached to the now ancient and almost completely superseded régime and order of Spain.

THE right of the state to appoint a bishop to a vacant see, for instance, was a claim which led to years of controversy in the Argentine. In other places, the skill with which the Church has carried on its spiritual mission in the face of swiftly changing governments and political programs has been a truly marvelous manifestation of patience and sturdy determination. The guiding principle is well expressed in an address by Pope Pius XI: "We act only in the sphere of religion, we defend only religion, when we battle for the freedom of the Church, for the sacredness of the family, for such institutions as the school. In all these cases we have no political end in view; but since political representatives have attacked religion, defense is a duty incumbent not only upon bishops and clergy but also upon citizens of whatsoever nations." Nothing proves so well the willingness of the Church to accept every kind of régime, or every possible form of compromise with government, as does the stormy and crowded history of the past few years.

LOCAL pride has flowered in some strange growths, but perhaps the queerest yet reported is the request

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made by the Board of Trade of New Brunswick, New Jersey, to Governor Moore that the Hall enquiry be dropped on account of the unpleasant publicity it is bringing to the neighborhood where the crime was committed. Another reason, rather implied in the nature of the body which has made the complaint than in anything it says, would seem the bad business that is following in the wake of the investigation. The mere notion of a department of justice conducting its business in close liaison with local Boards of Trade and Chambers of Commerce, and not issuing its orders until a graph of sales and property-values has been put into evidence, would be diverting if the drab materialism that lies behind it did not rather provoke disgust. The very dignified answer of the state executive that the good name of a district is imperiled more by languid efforts to apprehend a culprit than by any activity after a crime has been committed, leaves the New Brunswick Board of Trade nursing a well-deserved reproof. A criminal investigation is always a blow to local civic pride. But to those worthy residents who resent the publicity that has descended upon New Brunswick, one can only repeat the famous advice once given in the French Chamber during a debate upon the abolition of capital punishment because of its affront to human dignity: "Suppose the assassins start first."

ROBESPIERRE, whose taste for executions on a wholesale scale did not prevent him occasionally getting off some very astute things, once declared that "mankind will forget a good deal, but never to buy cheap, and to sell dear." Mr. Carleton A. Chase, president of the New York Bankers' Association, and Mr. Maxwell S. Wheeler, head of the Associated Industries of the State, with an imposing capital investment of $24,000,000,000, were in the news last week to remind us afresh in what unexpected places human wisdom may be made vocal. Appearing before the Industrial Survey Commission, in the rooms of the Bar Association, both gentlemen complained of the "steady stream of restrictive legislation" that is coming from Albany, and pleaded for a little breathing space for hard-pressed capital. "We do not ask you to discard any of the laws favoring labor," said Mr. Wheeler. "But we do ask you to stop for a while, and give industry a chance." Mr. Chase was no less emphatic. Many of the laws, he insisted, "ignored the fact that economic laws could not be changed."

IT is not our purpose to hint that in making their protest on behalf of the interests they represent, either spokesman was insincere or conscious of misstatement. We merely wish to point out how profound a fallacy lies at the root of their plea. What are termed "economic laws" not only are not immutable, but are being changed all the time. To their control by the very government that is now asked to stay its hand, the prosperity of American industry is largely due. Evidence before the Tariff Commission, which The Commonweal quoted a few weeks ago, gives some idea with what meticulous attention to the demands of individual industries this control is exercised. Exactly who gains in the long run from a system of tariff-protected industry, is far from being a "res adjudicata." Troublesome theorists still exist who go further than either Mr. Wheeler or Mr. Chase in their devotion to economic law. They believe, or profess to believe, that by letting the whole world produce and sell anywhere and everywhere, at its own unhampered gait, a level of well-being would be reached, higher, or at any rate no lower, than that which prevails today. In homely language, they claim that what the consumer and the worker gain upon the ice-cream stand of higher wages, they lose upon the merry-go-round of increased living expenses. But one thing is certain. Having given its protection to the manufacturer, and thereby made possible such portents as a capitalization of $24,000,000,000, the state cannot "stop for a while." It is in duty and in conscience bound to see to it that, behind the shelter of the tariff-wall, the manufacturer is not permitted to invoke a competitive law to lower his overhead which has already been abrogated to secure his profits. The public, after all, is no fool. It knows that no law favoring labor at Albany or elsewhere, gets upon the statute-book without having undergone the sharpest scrutiny from very keen and very powerful men.

BREAD, it appears, must be added to those things which Mr. Sinclair Lewis has termed "holy simplicities of life," henceforth only to be known as traditions by Americans who do not cross the ocean. Professor Albert P. Mathews, of the bio-chemical department of the University of Cincinnati, did not mince his words at Williamstown when mentioning the matter of the staff of life as supplied to the people of these United States. America, he claimed, was offering bread to its millions, the production of which was "simply a crime." That golden loaf, so fair to the eye in its waxed paper wrapping, so lavishly advertised on billboards which feature rosy children delighting in its appetizing flavor, and proud fathers and mothers endorsing its bone- and muscle-building qualities, is, according to the professor, one dietetic fraud the more. The bleached flour of which it is compounded has been robbed of much of its nutriment—it dries out and is unfit for consumption "the day after it is purchased." The warmth of the professor's remarks, we are told in press reports, "elicited amusement." Audiences at Williamstown must have a peculiar sense of humor. Perhaps, like the apocryphal peasants on the eve of the French Revolution, they solve the problem by eating cake. In any case, we hoped they laughed out loud when Dr. Barnard, president of the American Institute of Baking, told them that various bakeries had

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attempted to market the more nutritious forms of whole-wheat bread, only to find that the American public "wouldn't buy them." We should like to be told the names of these "bakeries," their status in the combine, and their appropriation for advertising the "more nutritious forms." No one should know better than Dr. Barnard that the American public will buy anything that is offered to them.

THE prosecution of Mr. Frank Harris in France under that deadly and vague section of the Code Napoleon which reads, "offense against public morals," makes a rather sensational news item; but it is not the innovation it is being represented. The history of bootleg literature is a long and interesting one. Its activity was at its height just before the French Revolution, and those who possess or have access to that scurrilous series, L' Espion Anglais, printed in London in the 1780's, are in a position to study many of the secret influences that were combining for the ruin of the old order in France. The lot of the fugitive printer was by no means an easy one. Governments, or rather courts, were reciprocally sensitive to his enterprises. Lord George Gordon, of riotous memory, was even sent to the Tower for a slander on the French queen. A cohort of "prominent litterateurs" we are promised, will rally to the defense of Mr. Harris when he faces trial, and we can be quite sure that an abundance of eloquence, with the freedom of the press as its theme, will be spilt. But if his prosecution will end in preventing our young fauns and centaurs of literature from giving a spurious value to their releases by having them set up under the chimeras of Notre Dame, few people will complain.

THE DOCTOR OF LETTERS

BY a salutary coincidence, three booksellers in diverse corners of the earth—New York, Paris and London—have declared that the literary longevity of the "classics" is subsidized only by the academic atmosphere. "Were it not for teachers and professors," one of them remarks, "not more than two or three copies of Thackeray would be sold in a year."

Allowing for some exaggeration—statistics are obviously notorious—the opinion is probably correct in the main. What, then, must the fate of these classics be if, as is asserted anew by three recent critics in the same cities we have named, the standing of literary teaching has been lowered abysmally during the past twenty-five seasons by diverse circumstances, among which are poor salaries and crowded curricula? Readers who have been developed into lovers of literature through college and other agencies may well take the matter to heart and ask, at least, precisely what is an admirable doctor of letters.

We are all reasonably familiar with Browning's heroic Grammarian, who "settled *Hoti's* business" and "properly based *Oun*." It remains quite essential to admire the Grammarian while conceding that very likely he was a student rather than a teacher. But there is another kind of scholarship more to the point and much less common. It is the wisdom that comes of disciplined judgment. How is a younger person to gain imaginative perception of life's values if the master under whom he sits is vague in his interpretation, or narrow in his mood—just as if he had opened a door only a little way and were undecided about whether to go out or stay in? What is wanted is neither the rash boldness of the headstrong, nor the timidity of the weak; but the open serenity of a man who has looked around patiently and chosen.

Nothing could be more true, of course, than that argument about tastes is futile; but "tastes" is not at all the same thing as "taste." There are standards and there is a difference between the genuine and the sham. We may prefer shantung to pongee, but only the unwary will choose a second grade of either. The man who advertises his right to admire shoddy art is on a level with a citizen who prefers a stocking to a savings bank. Wherefore, to be brief, we shall say that only he is qualified to speak of literature who has a good ear for the harmony of living; who recoils instinctively from the jar of falsehood, ugliness and insincerity. Such a person will be well-bred as well as well-read. He will have pocketed nuggets of experience and made wine from things trodden underfoot. Remember Ruskin's burry advice to a Glasgow correspondent: "To love the beautiful in painting, you must first love it in nature—then be long among noble art. You have little nature left at Glasgow within thirty miles, and no art within 300. Don't be ridiculous and affected whatever you are."

The more one thinks of it, the more one sees that this business of teaching literature is dizzily difficult. A man comes to it impelled by a certain fondness for reading—or maybe skill at turning a readable stanza. Then suddenly a world settles upon his shoulders—the world that has been lived through and interpreted by the masters; and another world that will have to be experienced by the young who approach, so eager, so untouched by realities, so much in need of direction. Atlas had no heavier a burden on his shoulders. How is one to manage? Surely the only possible answer is one that seems paradoxical and improbable—to keep alive in oneself the spirit of youth, the joy of living and adventuring, despite the thousand cares that make for dreary age. A veteran teacher—Mr. A. C. Benson—once said something to the point:

"God will not let any of us stay where we are, and yet the growth and progress must be our own. We may delay and hamper it, but we may yet dare to hope that through experiences we cannot imagine, through an existence we cannot foresee, that little seed may grow into a branching tree, and fill the garden with shade and fragrance."

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RELATIONS WITH LATIN AMERICA

By WILLIAM FRANKLIN SANDS

THE publication of The Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States Concerning the Independence of the Latin-American Nations* could hardly be more timely. There has been need of it for many years. Some of the older generation of our diplomats have long thought that the spare time of secretaries of legations and of embassies might be profitably employed in just such research work. It was definitely a part of the plan of Grover Cleveland, Richard Olney, and W. W. Rockhill to draw into the diplomatic service men capable of development along these lines, a plan completely overthrown by McKinley's administration. To break down the reserve of chancelleries and their reverence for the sacredness of "state secrets" it took the world war, and the pressure upon them of a spreading, urgent desire for security in peace of those who bear weapons in war and pay with their blood for national policies which they do not understand and over which they have not the slightest control.

In 1916, Dr. Alejandro Alvarez, of Chile, addressed to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace a strong plea for aid in securing the publication of material from the North-American state archives upon the period of Latin-American independence. Dr. James Brown Scott, who, more than anyone, has contributed to the diffusion of interest among us in matters which have so long been the field of specialists, succeeded in arranging that this work be undertaken by Dr. William R. Manning, professor of Latin-American history at the University of Texas and author of several important works on international relations. When the United States entered the war and the state archives were closed to the public, Dr. Manning, by a stroke of the good sense which is beginning to characterize the State Department, was drawn into the department of the Division of Latin-American Affairs. In 1922 when restrictions were raised, he was so fortunate as to find available, Mr. T. John Newton, for forty-eight years in the Bureau of Indexes and Archives, who had been retired just at that time under civil-service rules. There is no one living more familiar than Mr. Newton with the older documents. Thus the work has been brought out by the Oxford University Press, American branch, under the best possible auspices.

The three volumes, comprising 2,200 pages, covering the period between 1815 and 1830 deal, not only with Latin America, but with all the world. We were trying out, developing, and consolidating principles of national policy, domestic and international, general and particular, to which we have since been constant in the main, allowing for individual interpretation of the principle involved and for occasional pressing self-interest, shaping interpretation and beclouding principle. There is no immaculate national record; there is no sainthood among nations nor means of canonization for consistent virtue in heroic degree. This record of fifteen years of anxiety, however, is a worthy record of national striving.

"The foundation of our municipal institution is equal rights; the basis of all our intercourse with foreign powers is reciprocity." "The European alliances of emperors and kings have assumed as the foundation of human society, the doctrine of unalienable allegiance. Our doctrine is founded upon the doctrine of unalienable right."

"The course of policy pursued by the European governments and by the United States on this subject has been that of neutrality. But Europe has been neutral with a leaning of inclination on the side of authority and Spain, while the United States have been neutral with a leaning of inclination on the side of liberty and South America."

At the same time, it was not negation of the principle of authority or of legitimacy that put us on the side of the colonies; not what was understood in Europe for a century later as a revolutionary spirit, but rather quite truly, if one is to judge by the private utterances of the men who guided our destinies at that time, a firm belief in the right of nations to choose their own form of government unhampered by other nations, and a conviction that while the republican form is the ideal and unquestionably the best suited to our own needs, it might not be the best for all.

John Quincy Adams, in an instruction to Caesar Rodney, our minister to Buenos Aires, lays down distinctly the American belief:

> The principles always avowed by Mr. Rivadavia, the minister and effective member of the [Argentine] government are . . . American; a government by popular representation and periodical election; the suppression of ecclesiastical supremacy; the freedom of the press and the security of personal liberty, appear to be duly appreciated by him as the only foundations of a social compact suited to the wants of his country and with these fundamental principles no preference for European connections, much less predilections for European princes, can be entertained.

Juan Pablo y Anaya, Mexican agent to the United States, assures James Madison, President, from New

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* *The Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States Concerning the Independence of the Latin-American Nations, compiled by William R. Manning. New York: Oxford University Press. Three volumes, $15.00.*

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Orleans, March 18, 1815, that "Your Excellency will permit me to say that between us and these States [the United States] there is no other difference but that of language; interests, rights, etc., are alike. I am quite sure that Your Excellency will agree with me that the plan we must adopt, agreeable to nature and our common interests and rights, is that of absolute severance of America from Europe."

On the other hand, Theodorick Bland, American agent, in his report of November 2, 1818, warns that Americans should not be too sanguine that our principles of political life shall or can be completely assimilated by Latin America:

> The Christian religion, as has been justly observed, is, in all its various forms, essentially an intellectual mode of worship. All its different sects, more or less, inculcate the communion of mind with infinitely amiable and benevolent Mind. Its fundamental principles, therefore, correctly understood, are exceedingly friendly to the cultivation of the intellect. But a contrast of the Catholic establishment in Chili with the established church and toleration of our country under its colonial system will show how extremely different the effect and consequence of the same divine emanations may be, in proportion as they are mingled . . . with the sordid objects of governments and of men. The rival sects in our country as well as the church of the state (which was itself a derivation from the older establishment) made the cultivation of the mind and exercise of the intellect esssntially necessary as well for the pastor as for each of his flock. . . .
>
> The church was made to every hearer a school of polemical exercise, as well as a house of adoration and prayer. The colonist of our country thus had his mind imperceptibly enlarged and integrated, his reasoning faculties sharpened and prepared on political as well as religious subjects.
>
> On the other hand, the established church of Chili tolerates no rival, and suffers nothing like religious controversy and is itself the congregated original, whose creed suggests no inquiry nor challenges any investigation. The mind hears the dogma dictated which it is commanded to believe, without daring to doubt or presuming to ask a question. Men are faithful but not rational believers: the rich and shining ceremonies of the church glitter before their senses; they yield reverence from habit; and their minds, overshadowed with a gloomy obeisance, rest content in a kind of irrational silence.
>
> The Catholic religion itself is better understood in our country [remember that this was written in 1818] because its principles are discussed and explained and much has been published in its vindication. But in Chili it is never controverted, seldom expounded, and stands in need of no vindication. It is upheld by power. The people comply with its ceremonies without presuming to question their meaning, and consequently the great mass of them understand little of the principles of the religion they profess. Hence, from this cause among others in our own country, the first revolutionary blow aroused multitudes of the most adroit veterans in argument whose reasoning powers attracted the admiration of the world. But the Chilino, with awakened feelings as keen and as strong, and animated by a courage as determined and invincible, is as yet a stranger to mental struggle and political controversy.

Again, John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State, to Richard C. Anderson, our minister to Colombia, under date of May 27, 1823, in an instruction which is of very present interest in connection with Mexico, says:

> Among the usual objects of negotiation in treaties of commerce and navigation are the liberty of conscience and of religious worship. Articles to this effect have been seldom admitted in Roman Catholic countries and are even interdicted by the present constitution of Spain. The South-American republics have been too much under the influence of the same intolerant spirit; but the Colombian constitution is honorably distinguished by exemption from it. The tenth and eleventh articles of our treaty with Russia or articles to the like effect may be proposed for insertion in the projected treaty, and after setting the first example in South America of a constitution unsullied by prohibition of religious liberty, Colombia well deserves new honors in the veneration of present and future ages by giving her positive sanction to the freedom of conscience, and by stipulating it in her first treaty with the United States. It is in truth an essential part of the system of American independence. Civil, political, commercial, and religious liberty are but various modifications of one great principle founded on the unalienable rights of human nature and before the universal application of which the colonial domination of Europe over the American hemisphere has fallen and is crumbling into dust.
>
> Civil liberty can be established on no foundation of human reason which will not at the same time demonstrate the right to religious freedom. The tendency of the spirit of the age is so strong toward religious liberty that we cannot doubt it will soon banish from the constitutions of the southern republics of this hemisphere all those intolerant religious establishments with which they have hitherto been trammeled. Religious and military coercion will be alike discarded, and all the institutions framed for the protection of human rights in civil society of independent nations, and the freedom of opinion and faith, will be guaranteed by the same sanction as the rights of personal liberty and security.
>
> To promote this event by all the moral influence which we can exercise, whether of example, of friendly counsel, or of persuasion, is among the duties which devolve upon us in the formation of our future relations with our southern neighbors; and in the intercourse which is hereafter to subsist between us, as their citizens who may visit or transiently reside with us will enjoy the benefit of religious freedom in its utmost latitude, we are bound to claim for our countrymen who may occasionally dwell for a time with them, the reciprocal exercise of the same rights.

The causes of revolutionary unrest in Latin America were reported and emphasized with what would seem to be their true historical value:

> Without traveling through a long historical detail of events, it will be sufficient to observe that in Chili as in Buenos Aires the moving causes of the revolution were not the oppression of the Spanish monarchy. The people of Chili were not first awakened by persecutions and

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> sufferings to a sense of their power and their rights; they had always been quiet for more than two centuries and a half. The united vigilance and cares of church and state had tamed every restless spirit and checked every wayward thought . . . When the wars arising out of the French revolution and disturbing all the nations of Europe overwhelmed the peninsula of Spain and drove the ancient dynasty from the throne . . . the colonies could no longer be governed as formerly. Each one . . . began calmly to think of self-government . . . not in a spirit of rebellion, but as a deplorable necessity.
>
> In the history of South-American independence there are two periods clearly distinguishable from each other: The first, that of its origin when it was rather a war of independence against France than against Spain, and the second, from the restoration of Ferdinand VII in 1814.

The correct attitude of neutrals and their rights with regard to both belligerants form a considerable part of the correspondence. The sympathies of the United States are clear; there is no admonition to be "neutral even in thought;" there is strict insistence on official neutrality, and on the right of neutrals not to be made to suffer by the acts of the contending parties. At the same time, the inability of our young government to guard its wildernesses and unsettled coastlines permitted a recrudescence of "privateering" amounting to real piracy, in which many very respectable American citizens took secret but not unprofitable part.

The Spaniards had a case, but one badly presented and defended petulantly and inefficiently. Florida, Cuba, various attempts of European governments to gain a territorial foot-hold in America kept our relations with Spain very tense. The Portuguese-Brazilian minister was gravely censured for the "improper procedure" of "passing by the government to address himself to the country," in a word for following a policy which later our own representative at the Versailles Peace Conference after the world war, used as a powerful adjunct to his diplomacy for peace; a policy which today is practised by all the senior nations through the press and other agencies. Intense dissatisfaction is expressed by Spain that in spite of professed neutrality, "representatives of the United States omit no opportunity to urge European ministers of state to recognize the independence of the Spanish colonies."

The protests of Spain against privateering recall similar protests of a later Adams at London on our own behalf against the same grievance, during our Civil War some fifty years later, and again another scant fifty years later, our repeated notes to Germany on submarine warfare, and to Great Britain on trade restrictions.

Richard Rush of the city of Philadelphia, at London, may have had some awkward moments through the partisan activities of his good friends and fellow townsmen, Mr. Meade, Mr. Mifflin, and Mr. Ingersoll. Our official eyes were turned uneasily to British monopoly of Latin-American trade. It was not quite clear whether British speculations portended a permanent ascendancy or a sort of false trade-boom like our own some ninety years later. Richard Rush writes from London, January 18, 1925:

> The measure of recognition of Great Britain had undoubtedly been urged on, not only by the general example of the United States, but specially, I believe, by the knowledge of the fact that treaties of commerce were in agitation between these new communities and the United States . . . In the meantime, British merchants and manufacturers, British capitalists, in short, the whole British public are eagerly turning their eyes under this impetus from their government to the American hemisphere. They are endeavoring to link Britain to these new states and these new states to Britain by every tie that excited cupidity can devise and enormous opulence carry into effect. . . . Twenty millions of pounds sterling have already been drawn into this vortex and how soon the sum will be doubled no one can tell. A portion of all this eagerness is doubtless the effect of momentary lures and will spend itself; but it serves to give warning of the vast commercial and political changes that are approaching.

The rôle of Russia in Spanish relations with the Americas is more baffling, probably because it was based upon ideals rather than upon dynastic or commercial interests. Russia was deeply concerned. Recent students of Czar Alexander I, incline to believe in a complete swing from his early liberal tendencies absorbed from his French revolutionary tutor, to ultra-conservatism, to an overinsistence on "legitimacy" in governmental succession. I do not think it necessary to accept unqualified belief in the reactionary principles of Alexander's later life. It is fair to admit to him a conviction closely paralleling that of Woodrow Wilson, 100 years later, that the destinies of a much shattered civilization (torn by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic world war) could not be reshaped for good except by a league of the principal powers, a League of Nations, inspired by the principles laid down in his remarkable secret memorandum which was so uneasily and incredulously received by Metternich and by Alexander's allied monarchs. Contemporary Americans were inclined (according to present evidence) to accept his guiding principles for a League of Nations soberly and in good part and by no means as a hypocritical cloak for aggression; the League itself, however, the Holy Alliance, they feared—and with good reason, for while the principles of Alexander might be trustworthy and in accord with our own, their supercilious reception by the member nations and the general attitude of the League toward the United States were calculated to give pause to cautious men.

Mr. Manning's compilation is valuable reading on many subjects at this turn of the cycle.

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ON THE CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

By DONALD ATTWATER

PROBABLY all instructed Catholics, though perhaps not able to give an exact definition, have a fairly accurate idea of the meaning of the expression, the "contemplative life." It may bring to their minds, first of all, hermits and semi-eremitical orders such as the Carthusian; and then, in greater numbers, monks and nuns, Benedictines, Cistercians, Teresians, Poor Clares, whose life has certain definite obligations, as the observance of the vows of religion, the singing in choir of the Divine Office, and the devotion of fixed periods to private prayer—the whole being directed toward an increase of spiritual life and nearer approach to God; and certain definite abstentions as from public preaching, mission work, and absorption in any other form of what is commonly known as religious activity.

But though most English-speaking Catholics know roughly what the contemplative life is, it is regrettably true that some of them dispute not merely its absolute necessity, but even its essential propriety. The spirit of the times may be summed up in the words, enjoyment, efficiency and competition; all connoting feverish activity and an exaltation of material prosperity. Such a spirit is so unfavorable to contemplative ideals that even among Catholics there is too great a tendency with those who wish to do good to rush into all forms of activity, without pausing to ask: "Is there a better way?" Heroic characters are wasted in an environment where energy is too often dissipated in solicitude over material things, and nothing is accepted as good that does not proclaim its results through a brazen trumpet. It cannot be denied that among otherwise exemplary people, the exercise of self-sacrifice and spiritual works, hidden from the eyes of the world and known only to God, is often held to be of little account.

"The essential idea of the monastic and contemplative life is to give oneself wholly and without reserve to God." God Himself has told us that He is not served exclusively, or even primarily, by those who are "troubled concerning many things." When that idea has once been grasped, the scope of the contemplative life becomes clearer. It is activity—but toward God, exercised directly to His honor, and, secondarily, for the good of men. We all acknowledge the necessity and efficacy of prayer; but prayer should be unceasing, in season and out of season. Since, from necessity, few Christians in the world can give the time they should to devotion, not the least part of a monk's work is to supply their deficiencies. The chief work of the contemplative "to which nothing is to be preferred," is the Opus Dei—i.e., the solemn singing in choir of the Divine Office—the seven offices at the proper hours, Matins and Lauds by night, and the remainder by day. This, with the conventual celebration of the sacred liturgy, forms a daily labor of love, a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, and is the heart of the monastic system and the chief means of attainment to a life devoted to God's personal and direct service. Everything else, private prayer and meditation, enclosure, silence, and fasting are only subsidiary to the same end.

But activity toward God does not consist entirely of prayer. Saint Benedict, in particular, provided for the health and recreation of his monks by careful regulations about manual labor. It doubtless surprises critics of the contemplative life to learn that among contemplatives the daily routine includes many hours of strenuous bodily or mental activity—and that, as a rule, not much more than half of the working day is spent in prayer. A sense of the "dignity of labor" is one of the great Benedictine traditions. There are, of course, varying standards of monastic observance in this as in other respects. Different forms of manual labor are undertaken; in some monasteries there is stricter silence than in others; some abstain entirely from flesh-meat, others do not; but each one forms a family of which every member strives after union with God by fixing upon Him the faculties of the soul, and withdrawing as far as possible from all worldly distractions. The presence of communities of such is of the greatest importance to the healthy religious state of any country. They are, if the expression may be used, spiritual powerhouses from which virtue goes forth throughout the land. And at present, when western civilization is under the influence of a degrading materialism to an extent not equaled even by the grossness of the eighteenth century, the contemplative monasteries are refuges of sane and holy living in a world plague-stricken with mad pleasure-seeking—places of refreshment, light, and peace within the borders of what indeed seems very like a devil's garden.

But as the contemplative is a hidden life, so its benefits are in a great measure hidden also. The contemplative cannot present a spiritual profit and loss account for the confounding of the critic; he cannot point, with the friar-preacher, to crowds moved by eloquence to penance; nor with the Jesuits, to a continent evangelized; nor, with the Franciscan, to vicious slums reformed. When asked for tangible results, he cannot say, "Lo, here!" nor "Lo, there!," but just, "Come and see." Only in the cloister can be formed any adequate idea of the spiritual force generated by these men of prayer—and then it is inferred rather than seen.

Many of those who criticize contemplatives would name the Society of Jesus as their ideal of what the

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religious life should be. But a well-known and reverend Jesuit, Father Rickaby, has said:

> We could have more conversions, if we did more penance to procure them. That is not a pleasing thing to think of. How can we fast and pray whose daily work suffers from our lack of time and strength to do it? There is comfort in the principle of the division of labor, and in those much reviled, but still Catholic, doctrines of vicarious expiation and communion of saints. We must have some of our number to go apart, and fast and pray and do penance for the rest of us—not certainly to excuse us in sin, not to cover our idleness and neglect of duty, not to exempt us from sorow and contrition and such penance as God will require of us personally; but to draw down by their extraordinary penance that extraordinary mercy and those superabundant graces, without which this country will never be brought to God. Thinking of this profound truth, one is filled with grief and resentment to hear the [contemplative] life . . . described as a "useless and selfish life." "To pray for the living and the dead," and to add fasting to the prayer of intercession, as Tobias did, does not strike us as so very necessary. Yet it may be just the one thing wanting to make the rest of our works efficacious.

Pius XI, in confirming the revised statutes of the Carthusian order last year, gave an unexampled panegyric of the contemplative life:

> All those who, according to their rule, lead a secluded life, remote from the din and follies of the world, and who not only assiduously contemplate the divine mysteries and the eternal truths, and pour forth ardent and continual prayers to God that His Kingdom may flourish . . . but who also atone for the sins of other men still more than for their own by mortification, prescribed or voluntary, of mind and body—such, indeed, must be said to have chosen the best part.

To a foreigner observing the greatness of the Church in America, its millions of adherents, its universities and colleges, its institutions and associations, its energy in every form of Christian activity, the most astonishing thing of all is a scarcity of purely contemplative communities of men.

In Great Britain, with a doubtful two and a half million of Catholics, there are five monasteries of contemplative men. The Carthusians at Parkminster, the Benedictines of Farnborough, Quarr, and Buckfast, draw most of their subjects from abroad, but two at least of these houses include English monks; while the Benedictines of Caldey Island are all natives of the British Isles.

We have the word of the Supreme Pontiff to the Church in England that the value of these bodies of "inactive" men is incalculable; there are many English Catholics who can confirm it by personal experience. And we marvel that the Church in the United States, with its fifteen or more millions of members, has found so few men to go into a desert place apart, to pray, or to stand on a hill with arms upraised to God to reinforce the combatants for Christ in the plain below.

SOME VULGAR ERRORS

By ROBERT J. KANE

"KNOWLEDGE," wrote Sir Thomas Browne, "is made by oblivion, and to purchase a clear and warrantable body of truth we must forget and part with much we know." The same authority called the things of which it is a gain in wisdom to clear one's mind, "vulgar errors," and indeed these latter furnished both theme and title for a famous volume of his.

It is now more than two centuries since the worthy doctor died, and still every day sees the downfall of some common error, and the rise of another to take its place. We may be quick to discover errors handed down to us from the past. Yet we continue to pass over many without recognition. As for the errors of our own day, they, of course, are often accepted as more or less valuable contributions to knowledge.

Although, as Browne shrewdly observes, any work dealing with vulgar errors "is not to be performed upon one legg," and, in fact, "should smell of oyle, if duly and deservedly handled," nevertheless I think it may prove profitable (or at least, amusing) to scrutinize a few errors concerning Catholicism which still flourish in certain quarters.

As a student in various large universities, I soon learned that it is not only the mob which cherishes misconceptions of the dogma and discipline of the Church. Not that my learned preceptors were actuated by any unfairness of motive. They merely repeated innocently what they had received uncritically. After all, a certain amount of ignorance must be predicated even of pedagogues.

Some of the most curious errors heard in the classroom concerned the Trappists. Our French professor, a native of France, once remarked that these monks dig a portion of their own graves daily, that they sleep in their coffins, and that they always salute each other with the "memento mori." Later, upon my asking for the source of this information, he answered that he was unable to recall it exactly, but thought it might be a book by Sarah Bernhardt. Of course he was merely repeating hoary old legends accepted by many Catholics and non-Catholics alike. It is only within comparatively recent years that standard works of reference have begun to report the Trappist rule correctly. Not until its eleventh edition (1910-11) did the Encyclopaedia Britannica cease to propagate these errors. It was only one of many such offenders. The first edition of Pierre Larousse's Universal Dictionary of the Nineteenth Century (of which the volume containing the article, Trappe, appeared in 1876) not only recounted the grave-digging and memento-mori legends but also stated that every Trappist keeps a human skull for purposes of meditation in his cell. I am glad to say that later editions of this

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work make amends by specifically repudiating the first two legends, and omitting all mention of the last.

Other testimony vindicating the Trappists may be found in the sixth edition of Meyers's Grosses Konversations Lexikon (1907-12) and in the Catholic Encyclopedia. The former, after noting the apocryphal character of the digging and greeting episodes, also takes occasion to demolish the theory that Trappists sleep in their coffins. The latter confines itself to a denial of the first two errors. Finally, I might mention that a recent letter from the Trappist monastery in Kentucky assures me that the use of a skull as part of the furniture of a Trappist cell has always been the exception rather than the rule.

From the standpoint of exactitude, however, it is melancholy to observe that even today, the New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge (1908-1912) continues to propagate the memento-mori myth. The legend has been traced to Le Génie du Christianisme, but it is uncertain whether it was original with Chateaubriand. At all events, it is interesting to note that as early as 1824, the Abbé du Bois, in his history of the abbey of La Trappe, took Chateaubriand to task for having been the dupe of this and other errors concerning the order of the Trappists.

Although the authorship of a vulgar error is almost as impossible to verify as that of a popular ballad, still there are exceptions. Twice during my career as a student I have heard a professor remark that "credo quia impossibile" is a fair statement of the Catholic attitude toward faith. The one, a professor of philosophy, asserted that he had found the phrase in a book (he did not mention the title) bearing the imprimatur. The other, a teacher of English, professed to have seen it in the works of some Catholic mystic, but he too mentioned no names. Challenged to give chapter and verse, he made diligent search only to find that one of the Church fathers—Saint Augustine, I believe—had quoted the paradox with disapproval.

As a matter of fact, had either of them but the Latinity of a Sir Thomas Browne, they need never have been in ignorance or in error as to the true source of the famous paradox. In the Religio Medici occurs this passage: "I can answer all the objections of Satan and my rebellious reason with that odd resolution I learned of Tertullian—'Certum est quia impossibile est.'"

The Catholic Encyclopedia furthermore assures us that Tertullian's credo (which, taken with its context, proves not so startling after all) was written while that worthy was a Montanist. So much for its Catholicity.

When, some years ago, a certain French judge, by virtue of an old law, dismissed the case against a man accused of stealing bread for his starving family, he was roundly scored by the anticlericals as a pupil of the Jesuits. Our French professor who told this story to us, also seemed to labor under the delusion that such a law and such a magistrate were quite "Jesuitical." However, it is to Saint Thomas Aquinas, rather than to the Jesuits, that we must go in order to find justification for the theft of food by a starving man. It was he who insisted that one in the extremity of need, might lawfully take enough from the superfluous goods of others to keep body and soul together.

Strange, is it not? At least one generation of Frenchmen bedewed with sentimental tears the pages wherein Victor Hugo told how Jean Valjean was sentenced to the galleys because he had stolen a loaf of bread for his sister's starving children. Curious, too, how blindly the anticlericals associate everything Catholic with the Jesuits.

Of the numberless victims of vulgar errors, Saint George, perhaps, is most to be commiserated. Calvin denied his very existence. Reynolds, an Anglican bishop of the seventeenth century, identified him with the unsavory George of Cappadocia. Gibbon did likewise—yet gave as his authority, not Reynolds, but a French work of no historical value. In passing, it may be noted that the disingenuous way in which he refers to this authority has been given due and delightful treatment in Belloc's essay, On Footnotes. Finally, at a time when most historians of repute had definitely abandoned the error of confusing Saint George with George of Cappadocia, Emerson, having gullibly swallowed Gibbon's false doctrine, thus glibly rephrased it in English Traits:

> George of Cappadocia, born at Epiphania in Cilicia, was a low parasite who got a lucrative contract to supply the army with bacon. A rogue and informer, he got rich and was forced to run from justice. He saved his money, embraced Arianism, collected a library, and got promoted by a faction to the episcopal throne of Alexandria. When Julian came, A. D. 361, George was dragged to prison; the prison was burst open by the mob and George was lynched, as he deserved. And this precious knave became, in good time, Saint George of England, patron of chivalry, emblem of victory and civility, and the pride of the best blood of the modern world.

Truth will have its innings. In our day, Professor Bury, who is responsible for the standard edition of Gibbon, assures us that the theory identifying George of Cappadocia with Saint George has nothing to be said for it. It is also worthy of note that Emerson's editors (one of whom is his son) have reached a similar conclusion. Still, lest one think that this particular ghost has been laid once and forever, I would call attention to a recent article by Mr. E. M. Forster, the English novelist, in the Atlantic Monthly. Therein we find the following:

"And even Saint George—if Gibbon is correct—wore a top-hat once; he was an army contractor and supplied indifferent bacon."

How long, O Lord, how long?

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THE PLAY

By R. DANA SKINNER

Loose Ankles

SAM JANNEY is the author responsible for the curious conglomeration once known as Came the Dawn, and changed, just before its Broadway début, to Loose Ankles. And his is a strictly divided responsibility—on the one hand for some brilliantly caustic comedy, and on the other for several interminably dull and meaningless scenes. The play as a whole, does not hang together.

What Mr. Janney has attempted is a sort of expurgated version of The Cradle Snatchers theme—the fortunes of a group of dancing instructors at public dance-halls, whose main object is to extract money from elderly women in search of young partners. The chief comedy is furnished by the scenes in the hall-room occupied by these parasites. The cynical philosophy of their trade, with its curious inner discipline and rules for avoiding trouble, their brutal comments on the ways of the elderly rich, and the distorted glasses through which they gaze on existence, combine to furnish a rapid-fire dialogue of considerable briskness and satiric point. Whether it amuses you or not depends on whether you find such material worthy of the theatre—even in comedy. At best, it is rather nauseating fare. Mr. Janney has at least kept it fairly free from the baser implications to which it could so easily have dropped.

The rest of the play concerns a young lady whose inheritance of a fortune depends on her marrying a suitable man. Rather than be forced into a marriage, she tries to create the outer appearances of a scandal. That is where one of the dancing boys comes in. It happens, however, that he is different from the rest. This is his first attempt at gold-digging. He confides his real feelings to the girl. And here the farce changes for a few moments to poetic drama. They are both of a kind; lonely, sensitive, never understood by the generality of those about them. In these brief moments of sincerity, Mr. Janney displays a quality which, if he would give it full sway, might lead him to write another Wisdom Tooth, or a play of equal insight. But farce returns quickly after this mute little love scene, and the play ends in indescribable confusion and idiocy.

In all fairness, we must add a word for the splendid characterization of the hardest of the dancing boys, by Osgood Perkins. His enlarging scope as an actor is one of the interesting items to watch in the world of the theatre. Carlotta Irwin does almost as well by a pert young lady convinced of an impending fate of old maidhood. The lead falls to Kathleen Comegys—a sister of the delightful Claiborne Foster. Except in the serious moments, she was miscast. She is better suited, one would say, to high comedy or straight drama than to farce. In this case, she must battle against the most artificial dialogue of the entire evening.

The Little Spitfire

FOR the most part, this is one of those comedies where—honest speech failing—the climax of wit is supposed to come in a series of "my gawds." If that doesn't place it sufficiently in your mind, mix up all the other elements of the old timers—the chorus girl marrying into the rich family, the parasitic villain, the stolen money, the girl's compromising effort to get it back, the misunderstandings, and the happy curtain. Add in a few strong words from the current "free speech" of the theatre to bring it up to date. Shake up the whole and you have The Little Spitfire of Myron C. Fagan.

But before you gather the full sense of gloom, you must further add some incredibly bad casting and costuming. What point there might be to some of the scenes depends entirely on the illusion of contrast between the rich family and its newly acquired in-laws. Mrs. Ralston "of Southampton" becomes, by virtue of dialogue and wooden acting, a figure of surpassing unreality. Mr. A. H. Van Buren, who directs the play and also plays Mr. Ralston—the president of a well-known chain of cigar stores—has seen fit to costume himself in suits with pinched-backs and slanting pockets! So much for this important detail. The rest is more grateful in the telling—largely concerning Miss Sylvia Field.

Miss Field is another member of that restricted group of younger actresses with a definite quality, an understanding of the poignancy that always lurks just beneath a smile, and an innate delicacy of feeling evidenced in the smaller gestures, the finer bits of stage business, and the subtler shades of expression. Long after I had gone to sleep—mentally—over the absurdities of Little Spitfire, I found myself watching, fully alert, the heroic efforts Miss Field was making to redeem the play and give it the shadow of veracity. She deserves a better vehicle. Another good bit of acting was made by Andrew Lawlor, Jr., who took the part of the defaulting brother. If the whole play had been an expanded vaudeville sketch, the "old stuff" perpetrated by Russell Mack would also have been good of its kind. As it stood, however, he was reaching too greedily for all the laughs.

The Scarlet Letter

THIS much heralded screen version of the Hawthorne story contains a few elements of real interest. One is the improved acting of Lillian Gish; another is the excellent small bit contributed by Karl Dane as Giles—Mr. Dane being the well remembered "Slim" of The Big Parade. A third is the great beauty of some of the photography; and a fourth is the smooth and sincere direction of Victor Seastrom.

Miss Gish as Hester Prynne passes beyond the mere evanescent fragility of so much of her work, and reaches moments of real emotional power. She is more forceful and less dependent on passive pathos. But of the story itself, as told on the screen, much less can be said. However much we may understand the severe temptation of Hester Prynne, or resent the stern, unforgiving and un-Christian ways of the Puritans who branded her, the kind of sympathy worked up for her and for the Reverend Dimmesdale is utterly and preposterously false. In the picture, they sinned before Hester confessed her previous marriage—before the minister was aware of any real obstacle to their legitimate union. To put it bluntly, they were both weak, and would, in the ordinary course of events, have had to pay a penalty for this weakness. The excessive severities of the Puritans thus become nothing more than an artificial way of creating a mawkish sympathy for the lovers and of diverting the attention from the real import of the story.

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COMMUNICATIONS

A WORD TO THE CRITICS

Norwalk, Conn.

TO the Editor:—What ails Catholic critical journalism? Will it eventually recover from its dullness, lack of urbanity, and want of wit? Where lies the road to more stimulating criticism?

Certain by-paths confront it. One is indicated in a contemporary novel, wherein is satirized the type of journal that attempts to sound a note of authority only to the extent of registering mild complaints about the ills of the world, until he (or she) who pays for the faultfinding, either gets tired of writing checks or bored with his (or her) hobby. Then the nice young editors stop rearranging the cosmic order to their complete satisfaction and go to work. The laborer, in whose manifold woes they have been interested so deeply, continues to occupy himself with the more abstruse aspects of the gentle art of ditch-digging, totally oblivious to the fact that gratuitous aid, consisting solely of advice, has been withdrawn. Those who were born or trained to arts less essential than that accompanied by pick and shovel, miss readable prose.

Futility, in bold-faced type, is written all over these organs; and it is with a distinct sense of relief that one turns into another by-path, well worn by an exponent of personal criticism: Mr. H. L. Mencken. If cerebral callosities and shirt-sleeves might be welcomed by hardened hands and overalls, then this hard-boiled gentleman ought to be admitted to the dignity of the laboring class, with whom, in truth, he has many things in common. If Catholic claims needed defense by broad-axe, no one on the present scene would serve so well as Mr. Mencken. I confess to a weakness for him, but realize that his prose style, in anyone else's hands, is likely to degenerate into sophomoric sarcasms and egregious epithets. Catholic tradition is too old for either. Moreover, sufficient difficulty is experienced now in coaxing otherwise amiable gentlemen from the caverns of Catholicophobia, without brandishing broad-axes before them.

Outside of the republic, Catholic criticism has come of age in the weekly of Mr. G. K. Chesterton, who writes tedious books with one hand, and edits and partially writes a thoroughly lively review with the other. Mr. Chesterton's criticism has grown up by growing down in the sense that he has descended into the dark ages to find much enlightenment, indeed. If his blood pressure is raised by constant straining for paradoxes, then it is lowered by his sanity and even temper. One gathers many quiet smiles from him; and this, in the days when almost everyone has forsaken individual for social reform, is most refreshing medicine for the spirit.

What ails Catholic criticism is that it has become emasculated, that it has fallen into the hands of old women and old men who write like old women. It will recover from its dullness when it exchanges feminine nagging and scolding for affirmative masculinity. It will recover from its lack of urbanity in the proportion that it loses its sense of inferiority, conscious or subconscious. It will recover from its want of wit, when it becomes less self-consciously virtuous. It would seem that the road to more stimulating criticism is an earthy way, a road of wine, song, and merry mirth, where good fellows tread together, and a frown means a hanging.

D. T. POWELL.

PLAIN TRUTH ABOUT MEXICO

Oxford, Conn.

TO the Editor:—Every American, regardless of his faith, must be interested in the conditions now existing in Mexico; consequently, the paper by the Right Reverend Francis C. Kelley, D.D., published in The Commonweal of August 4, is exceedingly interesting.

The meaning of an article of this kind should be so plain as to prohibit misunderstanding. Yet it states:

"To persecute the Catholic Church, they think, is to please the poor, foolish 'Gringo.' When he is pleased he will not notice the hand that steals toward his watch and stickpin. The policy of the Wilson administration was the proof that they were right, and our present policy does not prove them wrong. The American investor in Mexico was as welcome in the State Department under Bryan, as he was in the street."

A most careful reading of the above leads to the conclusion that the reference to the Wilson administration can be interpreted in two ways. The one, that President Wilson and his assistant, Mr. Bryan, refused to allow our treatment of Mexico to be influenced by the fact that large sums of money were invested in Mexican properties by citizens of the United States as well as other countries; or the Bishop's remark could be interpreted as a criticism of Wilson's treatment of Mexico.

WILLIAM R. PALMER.

Oklahoma City, Okla.

TO the Editor:—Mr. Palmer asks me to explain a paragraph in my article on Mexico which appeared on August 4. Especially, he wishes to know if it is to be interpreted as a criticism of the late President Wilson's treatment of Mexico, or a criticism of his treatment of investors in Mexican properties.

My answer is that the paragraph is both a criticism of Mr. Wilson's treatment of Mexico and of American investors.

RT. REV. FRANCIS C. KELLEY,
Bishop of Oklahoma.

UNIATS AND THEIR RITES

London, England.

TO the Editor:—Mr. L. Maynard Gray's communication on Uniats and Their Rites in your issue of July 14, makes it clear that language is no adequate test of a rite, and that the Roman rite is canonically distinct from other rites used in the Latin Church. It may not be generally known that the language of the Roman rite is not always Latin. Thus, in certain parts of Jugoslavia, Mass is celebrated according to the Roman rite, but in Old Slavonic, instead of Latin. The same occurs in Czecho-Slovakia on feast days of saints of the Slav race. A new edition of the Missale Romanum Slavonicum is now on the Vatican press under the able supervision of Monsignor Professor Joseph Vajs, of Prague University—one of the greatest living authorities on the Old Slavonic or Glagolitic liturgy as used in the Latin Church. The draft of the new concordat which is being negotiated between the Holy See and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, contains a special clause relating to the Slavonic Roman ritual and its optional use in any part of the country.

A. CHRISTITCH.

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BOOKS

King Arthur's Country, by F. J. Snell. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. $2.40.

STUDENTS of literature and history have reason to be grateful to Mr. Snell for the large amount of useful information which he has gathered from all sources for this book. It is refreshing to find that he does believe that there was an Arthur. A certain phase of thought at one time, utterly refused to have anything to do with tradition because it was a Catholic principle. Now it would never do to denounce tradition, say in connection with the Assumption of our Lady, and to uphold it in the case of Arthur and others. So all tradition was jettisoned.

But as time went on, it was discovered that there was a good deal more in tradition than the early critics were willing to admit. In this very book there is again recounted the remarkable case of the burial mound near Flint, in Wales, called Bryn yr Ellyllon, to which, from time immemorial, was attached a legend that it was haunted by a ghost in golden armor. In the last century the mound was opened by competent archaeologists, and there they found a skeleton of a man of great size, clad in bronze armor with gold scales—the sort of man who might have been in Wales in Arthur's days. Either, as Conan Doyle would probably claim, there was a ghost, or as most reasonable people would hold, there was a very tough tradition.

It is now pretty generally admitted that there was an Arthur (probably his Latinized name was Artorius) and that he flourished as a minor king or "laird," together with another shadowy great figure, one Ambrosius (which was Welshed as Emrys, still a surname in the principality). These lived in that dark era which Belloc calls "the gap," from A. D. 410, when the legions left Britain a prosperous civilized land, through a period of 187 years, up to 597, when the mist rises and we find the same country decadent beyond belief as the result of that lengthy period of pagan oppression against which Arthur, and incidentally, Ambrosius, waged war.

Such being the case, it must be obvious that the setting in which most of us know Arthur is entirely anachronistic, being that of an age of chivalry which had not dawned when he occupied the stage. There were no knights, no Round Table; no Siege Perilous. All these things are as much inventions as the huge Round Table which hangs in the hall at Winchester, which Henry VIII showed to Francis I, of France, as in very truth the table at which Arthur and his knights sat. Arthur, in fact, was one of the Romanized British aristocracy, left behind to do what they could for their country after the departure of the legions. He was, of course, not the son of Uther, the pendragon or ruler of the west, by a base trick played through the art of Merlin on Ygerne, the lovely wife of Gorlois, a minor king. That event was said to have taken place at Tintagel, in Cornwall—a lovely spot now much marred by a huge hotel. The ruins there are of a castle built much later than Arthur's time; but it is just possible that the visitor there may see one of those rare birds, the choughs—the ghosts of Arthur's followers.

Arthur almost certainly belonged to Somerset, and it is likely that the remarkable earthwork, known as Cadbury Castle, was the original of "many-towered Camelot." This is all desperately disputed, for Skene, a learned Scot, identified every place associated with Arthur in southern Scotland,

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Contents for September

THE EMERGENCE OF THE MISSOURI VALLEY INTO HISTORY
Gilbert J. Garraghan, S.J.
IMAGERY AS AN ELEMENT IN LANGUAGE
Stephen J. Brown, S.J.
THE EDUCATION OF A PRESCHOOL CHILD
Paul Hanly Furfey, Ph.D.
PERIPATETIC MATTER AND FORM
J. A. McWilliams, S.J.
CATHOLIC POETRY
Theodore Maynard
THE AMERICAN COLLEGE AND CATHOLIC EDUCATION
W. F. Cunningham, C.S.C.
CAN AMERICA BE COMMUNIZED?
John X. Pyne, S.J.
MONIST OR MANICHEAN?
Daniel J. Connor, S. T. L.
THE MEXICAN CONSTITUTION OF 1824 AND 1857
Marie Regina Madden, M.A.
CATHOLICISM AND PESSIMISM
Robert H. Hull

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even finding a Mons Badonicus, the scene of one of the king's eleven battles. These places have also been identified in Brittany, and one enthusiast has even located them in Lancashire. The fact is that Arthur was the Brythonic hero, and where the Brythons were strong, there are stories about him and places named after him—such as Arthur's Seat, near Edinburgh.

Where was that great battle at the Mons Badonicus, when the heathen were routed? Skene thought it was Bouden Hill, not far from Linlithgow, at the foot of which flows a Scottish Avon, showing that some Brython had left his native world for water. The general idea is that it was at Bath, on one of the hills which surround that most attractive of towns. Or perhaps it was at Badbury Rings, an ancient earthwork in Dorsetshire, steep to climb, but with a magnificent view from the summit. Who can say, or who can tell where was Camlan where he fell? Perhaps on the river Camel—a crooked stream, as its Celtic root indicates. If so, he could not have been rowed to the Vale of Avallon by four queens—or by any but a sturdy crew in a well-found boat. They would have had to face the whole treacherous western Cornish and Devon coasts, right up to the Bristol Channel; and then they might have crossed the shallow meres in the midst of which, perhaps, still flourished the well-known Lake Village, reaching the foot of the hill on which the Tor now stands where was the great abbey, Glastonbury of the Gael, said to have been founded by Saint Joseph of Arimathea.

It is a fascinating legend and one which would repay description, but cannot be dealt with here. There, according to legend, Arthur, and subsequently Guinevere, his wife, were buried. In the time of Henry II, and at the desire of that king, we are told that the grave was opened and the coffins of these monarchs with their inscriptions found. Is it true? Of course it is denied, as almost every historical statement is, by many. The popular legend is that Arthur never died, but sits in a cave like Holgar Danske, in the Scandinavian legend, or the O'Donoghue of the Lakes, in Kerry—asleep among his knights and awaiting the moment when his return will be essential for the saving of his country.

BERTRAM C. A. WINDLE.

Pushkin, by Prince D. S. Mirsky. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. $2.50.

THIS book, being written entirely to acquaint the foreign reader with one of the masters of Russian literature, should be judged from the foreign point of view—and for this reason it is difficult for a Russian to pass an impartial judgment upon it. Pushkin is one of the writers who have left the greatest impression on the intellectual movement of his own country; but at the same time he has never had over his countrymen the influence acquired by Tolstoy or Dostoievsky, nor even Leonid Andreyev or Maxim Gorky. Pushkin, indeed, was more a precursor than a prophet. It is due to the circumstance that he was the first writer in the realm of the Czars that his name has become a watchword in his country.

Prince Mirsky must be a very young man, and probably was brought up in the same school where Pushkin received his education—the Imperial Lyceum in St. Petersburg. He has drawn for us a very clever, instructive, and from a certain point of view, faithful sketch of the poet's character and literary work. But in doing so he has followed a preconceived idea, very prevalent at one time in certain circles of the Russian capital's society. He has become so absorbed in his hero, that he has failed to see one important fact an impartial judge can never overlook—the fact that Pushkin, in spite of his wonderful talent, absolutely lacked the divine spark of genius which allows a writer to influence, not the mind nor the intelligence, but the soul of his contemporaries. Such a man was Dostoievsky, such a man was Tolstoy, such a man was Leonid Andreyev in some of his works—notably in The Seven That Were Hanged.

Then again, Pushkin remained all through his life (and this Prince Mirsky admits) under the influence of the early French education he had received—of the French atmosphere in which the Russian better classes in the beginning of the nineteenth century were living. This atmospehre can even be detected in the works of Karamzine, whose historical studies breathe of the French classic school. Zhukovsky could never quite get himself rid of it. The first Russian writer who entirely discarded it was Turgeniev. This accounts, in great part, for the preëminent place which his works acquired in the literature of his country, and in the development of the intelligence of his generation.

Another circumstance that communicated to the whole works of Pushkin something artificial, was the constraint under which he wrote, and which prevented him from giving us the full measure of his talent. He lived in dreadful times. It is difficult for us now to realize the conditions of existence in Russia in the first years of the reign of Nicholas I, when the shadow of the December Revolution which inaugurated it, was hovering over the whole of Russian society. I doubt whether Prince Mirsky has read the little book which another very distinguished modern Russian author, Prince Serge Wolkhonsky, has written on this subject, and in which the whole part played by Pushkin in the December conspiracy is much better described than in his own. Had he done so, he would undoubtedly have mentioned the circumstance that among the papers found in Pushkin's desk after his death, was a drawing representing the execution of the five Decembrists who were hung, with the inscription in his own hand under it, "I could also have been there."

After all, what is Pushkin? A great tradition, if you like—but a tradition and a literary legend, none the less. His verses are fine, his prose wonderfully clever, his style artistically elegant—but the heart is absent from all his works, perhaps because he never dared give way to it, afraid of saying too much. His was talent that might have become genius. Had he lived fifty years later, had he, in spite of the lawlessness of his private life, not always been the slave of conventions he hated but from which he could not escape, his was a talent that might have become something truly great. His trace in modern Russian literature will never be effaced, because he was the first one to give it the realistic direction to which, later on, it owed so much of its fame. But he neither influenced it, nor his readers.

CATHERINE RADZIWILL.

The Life and Works of Edward Coote Pinkney, by Thomas Ollive Mabbott and Frank Lester Pleadwell. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.00.

AT last it is beginning to be realized that there was an American literature during the opening nineteenth century—a literature, that is, which reached beyond the two provinces of Massachusetts and New York. The intentions of the present book about Pinkney would therefore merit great praise, were its real merits far less outstanding than

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they are. Almost of necessity a pioneer discussion of some obscure person tends to become a bibliographical manual rather than a life-story; and here one sees much more of curious information concerning Pinkney than of Pinkney himself. That grave, impetuous, chivalric young man does, however, peer from between the pages—the son of a much traveled family, who happened at last into Baltimore where he received some of his education at Saint Mary's; a naval officer, abandoning the career for the sake of love and independence; a struggling lawyer, blighted in his hopes by a damaging reputation as a poet; and an editor far too prone to resent attacks upon his policies and integrity, even to the point of issuing challenges in high-handed fashion; and a young poet dead, with the praise of Poe for a laurel wreath.

Practically unheeded excepting by the more diligent anthologists, Pinkney's little volume of 1825 is nevertheless genuinely lyrical. It sometimes has the fine grace of the seventeenth-century song-writers, and sometimes the brooding speculation which later on would flower in Lanier. But one cannot overlook the interest of Pinkney for literary historians who wish to follow the strange meanderings of romantic feeling in America. One of his early poems, for instance, is entitled Italy, describing "fairy isles like paintings on the sky."

> "Nature is delicate and graceful there,
> The place's genius, feminine and fair:
> The winds are awed, nor dare to breathe aloud;
> The air seems never to have borne a cloud,
> Save where volcanoes send to heaven their curled
> And solemn smokes, like altars of the world."

That is Shelley's Epipsychidion, of course; but could Pinkney have known that supremely beautiful poem? His biographers offer no information nor does it seem likely that definite proof of affiliation could be adduced. Even so, this and other overtones of romanticism in the American poet's work are suggestive and interesting, proving as they do that Pinkney was sufficiently original to listen alertly to the most kingly music of the nineteenth century.

GEORGE N. SHUSTER.

Anatole France Himself, by Jean Jacques Brousson. Translated by John Pollack. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company. $5.00.

Anatole France at Home, by Marcel Le Goff. New York: The Adelphi Company. $2.50.

THERE is a type of literary mind which revolts at the suggestion that a man's private life, his every-day character, be studied in connection with his work. To such, the artist, when he enters his work-room, closes other things than his physical door—he closes as well the door of an hermetically sealed spiritual and intellectual compartment, and proceeds to the expression of a self upon which the imprint of his daily life has left no impression. To assert that for judgment of the work of Anatole France a knowledge of the man himself is necessary, will, of course, outrage these tender souls.

They will hold that the publication of the two studies of the French ironist by M. Brousson and M. Le Goff is unfortunate or amusing, according to whether or not they like what is scandalous; but they will deny that either of these books can be of the slightest value in a discussion of M. France's own literary productions. To them his works are what they are—the rest is mere gossip and scandal. Well, gossip and scandal though it be, most of us will be grateful

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for the opportunity these two books afford to meet "the master" at his fireside; and some of us will be of the opinion that the man there revealed to us explains much of the man's work.

The two books, written by two men who had been in close association with M. France, though at different times, leave practically identical impressions of the character and mode of thought of their protagonist. Both M. Brousson and M. Le Goff are admirers of France as an artist, and even in large measure, as a thinker; and if M. Brousson somewhat maliciously emphasizes the master's method of composing with the aid of scissors and paste, his regard for the finished product is no less enthusiastic.

It is easy to see why M. France chose Brousson for his secretary. There is much that is kindred in the two men's approach to life. M. Brousson, like M. France, is of the true tradition of the Gallic ironists, and the maliciousness of his treatment of his former employer shows that from that employer he learned his lesson and learned it well. The original French title of M. Brousson's book, literally translated, is Anatole France in Slippers. It is well named, for it leaves him in his slippers and in precious little else.

M. Le Goff also is a Frenchman, and being a Frenchman he, too, has a sense of irony. Unlike M. Brousson, however, he is as well a hero-worshipper; and being such, tries to make himself an apologist. Unfortunately for the hero-worshipper, M. Le Goff is also a truthful reporter, and the reporter presents us with a character identical to that revealed by M. Brousson. M. Le Goff continually harps upon the master's "goodness"; but just where it comes in, it is difficult to see. It is true, he took the part at times of the under dog; and it is true that he suffered fools. Yet the impression will not down that his support for the under dog rested not on love for him, but on contempt for the upper dog; and as for his suffering fools, he certainly did not suffer them gladly, but solely because they stimulated his contempt for humanity.

M. Le Goff himself writes: "The world and men seemed alike to him in all times, without change or modification of any sort; eternally culminating in wickedness, hypocrisy, and slaughter." Yet this was the man who came out for Dreyfus and proclaimed himself a communist. For all his admiration, M. Le Goff was not fooled; and we have a suspicion that neither was M. France. At all events, his belief both in the innocence of Dreyfus and in the truth of communism never led him into putting himself into any sort of danger. When he scented real trouble or the merest hint of personal peril, he promptly retreated into his shell. He said to M. Le Goff that he was no hero. He certainly was not. The man who won the Noble Prize was, there is no use blinking the fact, both a physical and a moral coward.

This, as revealed in these two books, is the man whom the world has been told to regard as the greatest literary light of his age; a man alike void of faith in God or in his fellow beings; a sensualist, utterly cynical, to whom love meant nothing but animal desire; a man alike vain and vindictive, whose superficial charm covered a mind mean to an incredible degree. The one idealistic book of his career, Le Crime de Sylvestre Bonnard, he dismissed contemptuously as having been written to gain recognition by the Academy. The Anatole France hailed by the world, was ashamed of his youth, ashamed that once he had written a book which possessed a heart. And yet of all his writings, that book will probably be the one which will survive.

GRENVILLE VERNON.

BRIEFER MENTION

Augustin Cochin: Ses Lettres et Sa Vie, by Henry Cochin. Paris: Librarie Bloud et Gay. Two volumes, 30 francs.

AUGUSTIN COCHIN, as has been said elsewhere in this issue, was one of the representative French Catholic laymen of his time. Devoted to various forms of political and social endeavor, he was also a trenchant writer and successful editor. His life brought him into intimate contact with great churchmen like Montalembert and Duchesnes, with leaders of the stamp of Ozanam and Le Play, with statesmen among whom Thiers and Falloux may be mentioned. Letters to and from these, arranged and edited with rare skill, enrich two volumes which one recommends without hesitation to all who practise reading of this kind. It should be added that Augustin Cochin's position as a liberal is of great importance to the student of politics and religion in contemporary France. He sponsored the republic loyally and tried to effect a loyal compromise with it. The fact that his life was not permitted to extend beyond 1872 may, in a measure, be responsible for the drift which affairs have since taken. There is refreshment in the acquaintance afforded by the letters with a man so enthusiastic and yet so tactful, so spiritually meditative and yet so well equipped for action. In short, it would be a pity if intellectual Catholics in the United States neglected these rich and suggestive books.

The Poetry of Our Lord, by C. F. Burney. New York: Oxford University Press. $5.00.

IT will be an interesting revelation to many readers, not special students of the Scriptures, to read in Dr. Burney's volume, The Poetry of Our Lord, that Christ generally observed in His utterances the rhythms and parallelisms that are but vaguely perpetuated in the antiphons of the Latin Testaments. A striking example of this is given by Dr. Burney in his discussion of the Aramaic form of the Lord's Prayer, which he describes as a little poem consisting of two four-beat triptychs. He contends that Christ composed His prayer in this manner with the intention of aiding our memory for its recitation. Still more remarkable from a poetical point of view is Dr. Burney's contention that Christ was one of the earliest among the Hebrews to make serious use of rhymes, which had been for the most part generally confined to popular verses. About the time of Christ the practice among the Hebrews of phrasing their petitions in rhymes began to be introduced, and Jesus first recited the Lord's Prayer in a series of these rhymes. Dr. Burney's examination of the formal elements of Hebrew poetry in the discourses of Jews makes an important contribution to literary history as well as to Scripture exegesis and liturgy.

It will be good news to the admirers of Dom Pedro Subercaseaux Errazuriz's fine series of watercolors illustrating the life of Saint Francis of Assisi, which The Commonweal noticed in its issue of December 2, 1925, that they are now available, singly. The publishers, Messrs. Marshall Jones Company, of 212 Summer Street, Boston, announce that examples of any of the pictures, loosely mounted on passe-partout, may be procured from them for $2.00 each. The aquarelles of Dom Errazuriz are redolent, in their delicate coloring and frugal line, of the ascetic spirit of the gentle saint.

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THE QUIET CORNER

"I counsel thee, shut not thy heart nor thy library."—C. LAMB.

Never since Dr. Angelicus had returned from his week-end at Long Beach, had he appeared quite as before. It seemed that, coming out of the sea, he had become thoroughly soaked in a rain storm on his way to his hotel. The Chinese physician, G. Lew Chee, whom he had consulted by long-distance telephone to Los Angeles, had resolved that the divinities of the salt water and the spirits of the fresh rain were in temporary conflict in the system of Angelicus, and he was recommended to cast them out by mind-force—in which the elderly scholar has of late shown some diminution. For several days there had been ominous shakings of the head behind his back. Could the end be coming? A depression seemed to be setting in, and he was noticed to mutter a strange word: "Malabara, Malabara!" sighing, "I hear you down the Andes—your golden bray comes to me in the sunset over the sea!"

The suspense was coming to a painful point when at last the Doctor declared in a climax—in what may be called a paroxysmic voice—"I must go to the Public Library—I must! I must!"

"Oh, say not so, Doctor," exclaimed Primus Criticus, expert on conditions in public ways and public libraries. "Say not so! The heat, the atmosphere, the people, those old books damp with antiquity and gummed with the thumb-marks of the new and old generations of our Melting Pot city—say not so!"

But the Doctor, taking his slender blackthorn stick, sticking his old West-Indian panama firmly over his humid brows, declared: "I can rest no more. I shall find Malabara. I shall hunt him down in history and fiction; through the Aztec and Muisca legends; through the conquistadors and chroniclers of the Mexican, Spanish, and Portuguese literatures; through the poetry, ethnology, zoölogy, and sociology of the tropics!"

"Who and what is Malabara?" meekly inquired Miss Anonymoncule in the angel voice that soothes the angriest contributor into placidity, "Doctor, who is Malabara?"

"Malabara—you don't know him! O Tempora! O Mores! Malabara, young lady, is the Golden Mule of the Andes, the first progenitor of all the mules, golden or leaden of the Americas. He was the sole survivor of a Spanish vessel wrecked off the coast of Colombia, his long ears greeted the Indians on the coast with such telling effect that they led him in triumph into the mountains, installed him in a golden temple, and worshipped him as the great "Sam," until the conquerors arrived, seized the gold for earrings and slave-bracelets, and gave Malabara to the cruel fate of pack-mule to the stout Fray Gumesindo in his parish in the mountains. This is the hero, this is the deified figure we have so long neglected for brigands, viceroys, and revolutionists in our Hispanic studies." With an ugly flourish of his walking stick, the Doctor disappeared.

Several hours later, a pale afternoon edition of the Doctor appeared, sank into the arm-chair usually reserved for prelates and persons of title, and called to Tittivillus for his palmetto.

"What luck, doctor?" inquired Hereticus, looking up from the final pages of the week's editorials. "Did you find the Portuguese encyclopaedia you spoke of?"

"I found everything except the precise thing I wanted. The elevator whirled me past the smoking-room where some of my friends from the hall-bedrooms and the Bowery hotels

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were smoking their blackened pipes of peace; I caught glimpses of the ladies' room where stout women were resting on sofas, while damsels before broken mirrors chiseled their lips with vermillion and ran combs through their bobbed hair."

"Did they find Malabara for you?" asked Miss Brynmarian avidly.

"They never heard of him! But they brought me works on the Island of Malabar, on insect life, maladies of the spine, and lives of diseased bishops. I had pamphlets piled up before me by whistling attendants; some of the contents were highly interesting, indeed. For instance, the report of Major Edwin Skinner to the Gorgas Memorial Institute. I took down this note: "If you want to feel death's sting just slap a mosquito at her dinner-time, and she'll get even. Human blood is too thick for the mosquito to imbibe. Therefore, after she has probed your skin she proceeds to inject a liquid to dilute your blood. This liquid is acid and causes the well-known sting. If you allow the mosquito to finish her meal in peace, she will draw most of the fluid out of your blood, thus leaving you little the worse for your experience. If, on the other hand, you smash her, she obviously cannot withdraw it and you know that you have been bitten." This is the reason why those people on country porches are so irritating with their constant slappings and pursuit of the delicate little insect. They are creatures of an etherial beauty, Hereticus, if you regard them merely from a visual point of view. But as they never practise blood-infusion with me, I may be biased somewhat in their favor."

"We always learn in listening to you, Doctor," added Miss Anonymoncule, "and I have more than once thought how cruel Cleopatra must have been to that scorpion to force him to sting her on the right spot at the exact dramatic moment!"

"Yes, my dear, and there was another pamphlet in which a wise European—I think he was a German—professor proved that insect life is far superior to our human civilization. Based purely on instinct, the ant and several less known insects have arranged civilizations better adapted for communal relations than anything mankind has been able to concoct through all our boasted ages of progress. Why, millions of these insects inhabit their apartment houses without the slightest clashing or disorder, each in his appointed place, doing his duty and apparently enjoying it."

The Doctor gradually resumed his accustomed placidity. "There was another pamphlet which showed that many of these insects functioned quite as well after their heads were cut off, as before. They continued their daily habits, went their social round entirely as though they wore their hats only at an afternoon affair. Up-to-date, no human being has submitted himself to the test of decapitation for the purpose of enlightenment, but"—and here the Doctor's eye took on a forbidding gleam—"I have known journalists, reviewers, and editors, who are doing their best to function without their cerebellums."

Tittivillus interrupted (the boy is now in the freshman class) saying, "When I was a kid, we used to cut caterpillars in half with Mamma's scissors, and the unconscious way they behaved—"

But with a high-pitched scream, Miss Anonymoncule and Miss Brynmarian rushed from the Library. Adjusting his spectacles, the Doctor, with the first smile in several days, settled down to read the manuscripts for the current week.

—THE LIBRARIAN.

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